experiences one or more natural disasters with varying magnitude, causing damage to infrastructure and private properties besides loss of human lives.

In the wake of the earthquake in Gujarat, a National Committee on Disaster Management has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister having representatives of the national and State level political parties to, *inter-alia,* suggest the necessary institutional and legislative measures needed for an effective and long term strategy to deal with major natural calamities in the future. The 1st meeting of the Committee was held on 18th February, 2001 and it was decided to constitute a Working Group which in turn will set-up Task Forces for suggesting long term measures.

(e) The present policy of the Government of India for accepting foreign assistance is not to issue a formal appeal on behalf of the Government, either directly or through any other agency, to attract relief. However, relief donated on a voluntary basis is accepted and acknowledge as a sign of international solidarity. Arrangements have been tied up with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for obtaining a line of credit of US$ 800 million.

Department of Disaster Management

2861. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for creating a separate Department of Disaster Management;

(b) if not, would such a proposal not be necessary for coordinating and acting immediately in the wake of any disaster such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes etc; and

(c) if yes, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (c) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is the Nodal Department and Natural Disaster Management Division in the Department is the dedicated division for coordination of all Central

efforts for management of natural disasters in the country including relief, rehabilitation, preparedness and mitigation. There is no proposal, at present, for creating a separate Department of Diaster Management.

Policy/Programme to help fishermen

2862. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated and policy or programme to help fishermen of the country in general and Tamil Nadu in particular to improve their fishing business and in buying modern fishing equipments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether fishermen in the coastal areas are often fall prey to the neighbouring country's illdesigns;

(e) whether recently a few fishermen and their boats were captured by Sri Lankan Army; and

(f) how would Government stop such incidents recurring in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following schemes are under implementation for helping fishermen in the country including the fishermen in Tamil Nadu for buying modern fishing equipments to improve their fishing business:

(i) Centrally . Sponsored Scheme 'Development of Marine Fisheries' through motorisation of traditional craft in which a subsidy of Rs. 12,000/- for Inboard Motor, Rs. 10,000/- for Outboard Motor and Rs. 6,000/- for gear unit is provided;

(ii) Centrally Sponsored Scheme for construction of fishing harbours and landing centres in which Central/States Grant-in-Aid is provided for setting up of infrastructure facilities like landing platforms, auction halts, provision of freshwater, cold storage etc.; and